



andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Somers resident weighing in on the Sliters N. lake access

2 messages

Scott and Marcie Adams <adamsbomb2@gmail.com>

Sat, Mar 28, 2020 at 3:44 PM

To: ProtectSomersBeach@gmail.com

Dear:

Angie Grove - Montana State Parks
Martha Williams - Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks
Andrea Goudge - CFO Sliters Lumber & Bldng Supply
Paul Travis - Executive director of Flathead Land Trust

My family are local Somers residents weighing in on the Sliter family's shoreline property on the north shore of the lake in Somers.

First, we like to say to the Sliter family...Thank you!!! for allowing the public to have accessed this area all these years. Though visitors to our valley may find this area, via word of mouth, for the most part - it has stayed a local prized gem and a welcome reprieve from all the other tourist laden areas around the lake. Every time our family walks the beach we are filled with thankfulness for this area since so much of the lake is private.

To be as direct as possible.....we are BEGGING you NOT to turn this area into a state park!! We've read the information made known to the public, and while I understand the idea behind doing this, it will change one of the only natural Northern Flathead Lake access areas in our valley.

While State park jurisdiction may bring more management to the area - I am not sure we need more management, AND.... it will definitely bring more traffic, more taxes and more restrictions; including in regards to fires, dogs and restrictions on times people can access the area.

One of the treasures of this N. Shore area is that it's the only YEAR AROUND access where people can find a wide open beach to freely walk the shoreline, bring dogs, have family fires and feel one is escaping from the daily grind of life to take in some of the most beautiful views in our valley.

I'd also like to note that though this may have been in the works for sometime, if you truly want to know what the public has to say, you'll have to actually ask locals about it. We've only just heard of this, because we read the up at one of the access points - and then read the article in The Daily Inter lake published March 28th, asking for responses within in 4 days (by April 1st). This is a very short time to allow the public to weight in.

Please keep this area a local playground - free of charge - free from State Governance and all the regulations they bring with it. (not trying to be rude; it's just a reality). Possibly turn it into a simple county park if you need governance, with only a garbage can at the entrance and a covered box locals can access and fill with recycled grocery sacks for people to pick up dog poop, but otherwise PLEASE do all you can to keep this area a natural local gem with free access year round. If tourists and visitors find the area - good for them, but let the established Volunteer Park in Lakeside (which will be expanding) and Somers Beach be the advertised public access areas for swimming, boating and the masses.

Thanks -

The Adams Family.



andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Concerns About Somers Beach

1 message

Connie Abadie <connie.abadie@yahoo.com>
To: ProtectSomersBeach@gmail.com

Wed, Apr 1, 2020 at 10:03 AM

Good Morning,

My family and I live at [REDACTED] which is directly across from the "Somers Beach". I recently read the article in the Daily Interlake. We have the same concerns as you in keeping the beach a safe and clean spot for families to enjoy. Last weekend with the nice March weather brought a ton of traffic on our normally quite road. People speeding at 50 MPH past our house to get to the beach. It was not something we enjoyed, so creating this to be a more populated area is a big concern.

Currently, we have a beautiful view of the lake past the large field that Silter's owns. It would be extremely disheartening to look out our house and see tourist with their 1/4 million dollar campers as we look out our front porch. I also believe it would bring our property value down. Cleaning up and regulating the area is one thing, but to turn this into an RV park is not an idea we would support.

We are also surprised that Burlington Northern is supportive of their purchased land being used. I know a couple of summers ago there was concern regarding an oil sheen found on the beach. With more activity on the beach, I think there will be more pushback from an environmental standpoint.

We would love to hear in more detail what you are considering in the ways of managing this. This decision would directly effect our property and we would like the courtesy of having open communication during this time with the planning committee or whoever is heading this operation.

Sincerely,

Danny, Connie, and Carly Boon

Chris Cassidy <cassidy43montana@hotmail.com>
To: "Protectsomersbeach@gmail.com" <Protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Sat, Mar 21, 2020 at 1:28 PM

Hello,
Just to let you know.
Somers beach is already protected by the Federal Government as a Migratory Waterfowl Protection Area.
It is not and has never been a "public" beach... most people down there trespassed over private property to get there, and the area is closed due to migratory birds nesting. People bring dogs that disturb the birds and nesting areas, and leave trash and bottles... do not distribute flyers telling people this is a public beach.
Burlington Northern has been notified of your flyers. This is not a public beach... it is a Waterfowl production area. Your flyers are telling people lies.

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Chris Cassidy <cassidy43montana@hotmail.com>
To: "Protectsomersbeach@gmail.com" <Protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Sat, Mar 21, 2020 at 1:33 PM

And the beach isnt there year round. It's gone during full pool... this is also a "Superfund" site with toxic leaching from the old lumber mill... you may have noticed all of the test wells and NO TRESPASSING signs while you were traipsing through the nesting areas with your trash and dogs...

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Chris Cassidy <cassidy43montana@hotmail.com>
To: andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Sat, Mar 21, 2020 at 2:36 PM

I implore you to go to the "beach" and take some trash bags... I found diapers, cigarette butts, bottles, cans, broken lawn chairs and numerous piles of dog feces... and FWP has also been notified...

There is a public beach on 93.

If you didnt know... there were 20 houses bought and torn down by the railroad because it is a TOXIC site... a Superfund site... and the marsh is Migrating bird Sanctuary... and I found more than one of your flyers crumpled up and on the ground... THIS IS NOT A PUBLIC BEACH

And I'd be happy to give you FWP, and Burlington Northern's phone number.

Chris Cassidy <cassidy43montana@hotmail.com>
To: andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Sat, Mar 21, 2020 at 6:04 PM

And FYI... 3 cars got windows smashed out and bags and purses stolen... today.. Saturday it's on Facebook Flathead 411



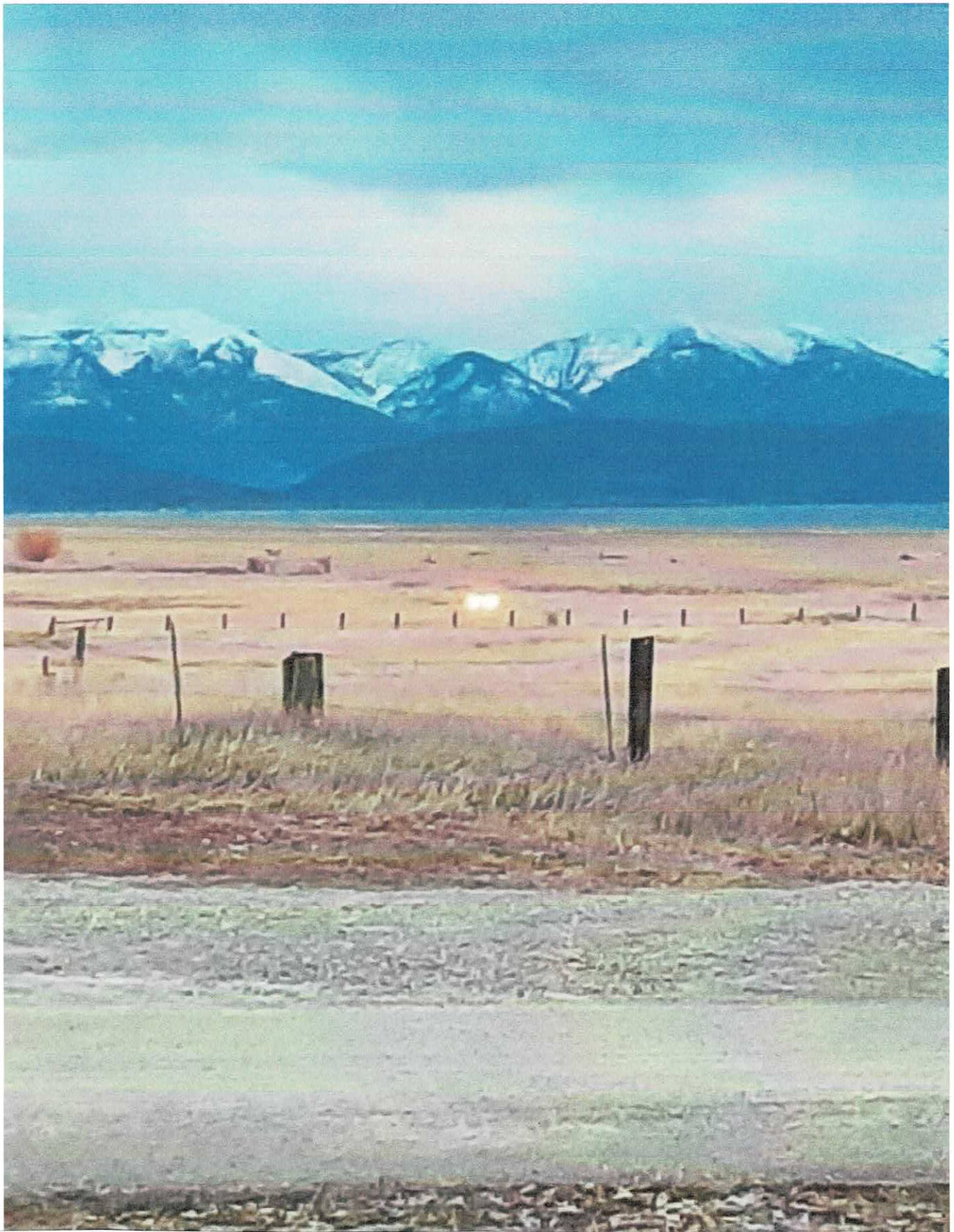
Beware parking at the Somers swimming area, someone broke 3 cars windows and stole things out of them. This just happened to me, all 3 cars had bags and purses stolen.

Kelli Morin Covington

**Kelli Morin Covington posted in
Flathead 411 Events/Need to Know/
Announcements/Questions.**

3/27/2020

Gmail - Somers beach.



Chris Cassidy <cassidy43montana@hotmail.com>
To: andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Sun, Mar 22, 2020 at 9:21 AM

That is one of numerous cars driving on tall dry grass... there were 3 grass fires in lower valley yesterday...

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andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>
To: Chris Cassidy <cassidy43montana@hotmail.com>

Sun, Mar 22, 2020 at 9:21 AM

Hi Chris:

Thank you for your passionate emails. The frustrations you express are some of the very reasons the Sliter family seeks to transition our property to state management as a State Park.

Grata Sliter, my grandmother, purchased this property in the 1930s. We are well aware of the historic and prolific year round trespass and use by the public of what many call "Somers Beach." We bring our trash bags, too. Believe me.

The Sliter family has been collaborating with Montana FWP, the Chair of the State Parks Board, legislators, Flathead Land Trust and others to bring a vision of a managed park to reality. Burlington Northern representatives are aware of these endeavors, I presented materials on this concept at the EPA-sponsored meeting at the Somers fire hall last August. The public's voice in preserving Somers Beach is an important step in the process, hence the flyers.

Our family has been working towards a managed access site at Somers Beach for over 30 years. My dad, Tom Sliter, would always say we need to protect access to the Lake for people. With nearly 300 miles of shoreline on Flathead Lake, there are pitifully few access sites available year round.

I would be glad to discuss in person with you. I am at our store in Somers most days.

Sincerely,
Andrea Sliter Goudge

[Quoted text hidden]

Chris Cassidy <cassidy43montana@hotmail.com>
To: andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Sun, Mar 22, 2020 at 9:28 AM

Thank you... the trash and disrespecting people has gotten out of control.... as an adjacent property owner, I too think there needs to be access... but it isn't being taken care of... there is trash everywhere, and I apologize if I'm sounding mean or harsh.... I'm sick of trash and disrespectful people and their dogs defecating everywhere... and the wildlife area is closed for nesting... it's gotten out of hand.

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>
To: Chris Cassidy <cassidy43montana@hotmail.com>

Sun, Mar 22, 2020 at 9:44 AM

Our family agrees, Chris. That is exactly why we would love to see the beach and lake shore managed.

It took me a while to formulate an email response as the tone of email can be taken incorrectly. I did not want that to be the case.

We will be out today to spread the word, collect trash and hopefully generate public support so that Somers Beach can be a staffed and managed state park. Flathead Land Trust has committed to fundraising for operations and maintenance if this project moves forward to support staffing and infrastructure. Feeling hopeful if this moves to State Land Board agenda in April. We do not see these same types of issues at Wayfarers State Park which is staffed during high use.

Attached are materials prepared by Flathead Land Trust with a bit more detail. Letters sent to me will be packaged together to be sent to the Director of FWP and Chair of the State Parks Board. Concerns about protecting adjacent WPA areas is a factor that will need to be addressed in site planning.

If this moves forward after a feasibility study by FWP, Angie Grove, the Chair of the State Parks Board told our family that public input will be crucial to chart out how the site could be developed and used.

Best,
Andrea

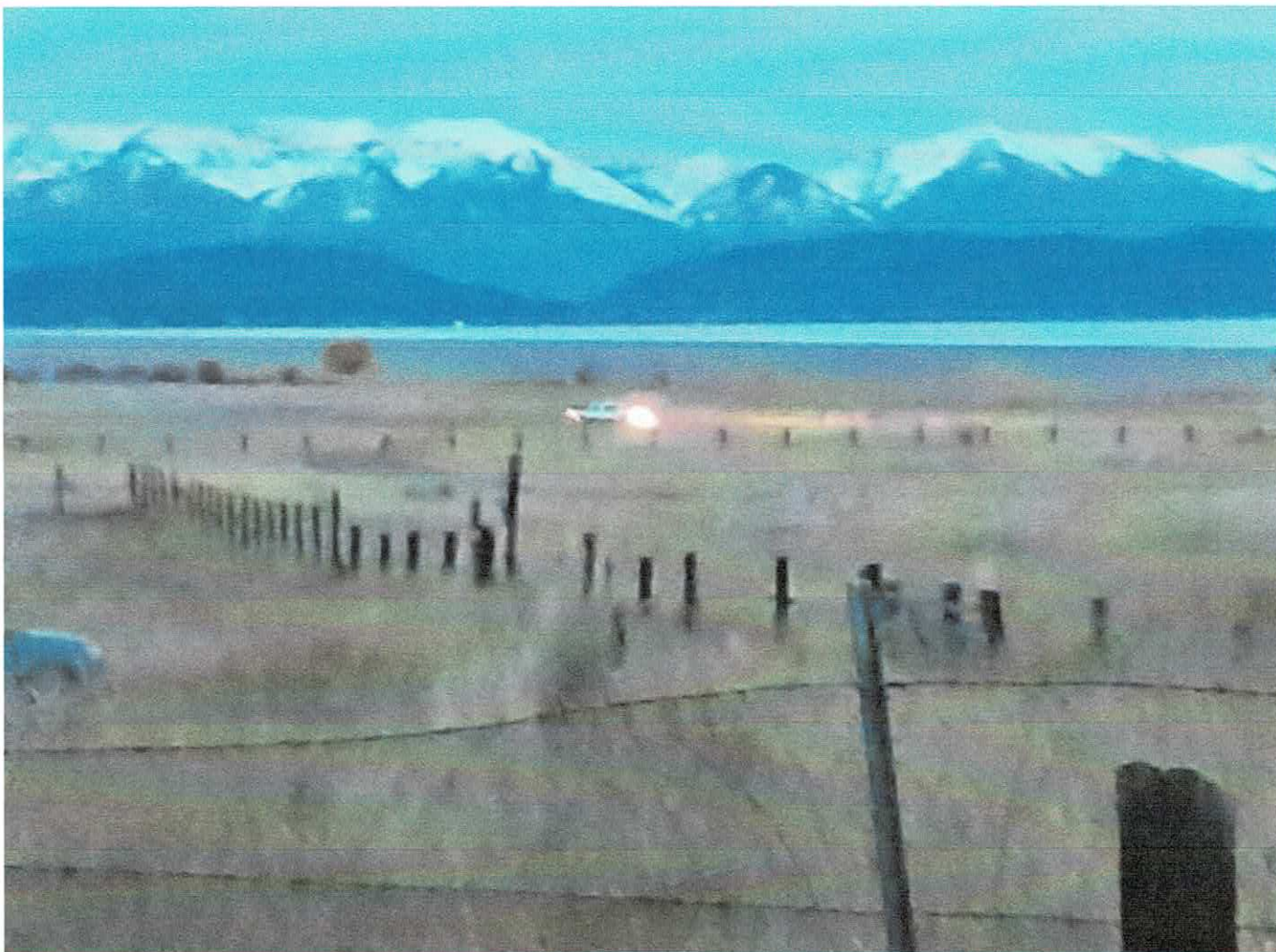
3/27/2020

Gmail - Somers beach.

Perfect. And thank you. I didn't mean to sound harsh... it would be welcomed if it was a managed area... right now it's a cluster... and the traffic is insane... hopefully the adjacent property owners are taken into consideration in this proposal... and cautions taken for fire mitigation... one spark and wind could drive fire right into Somers and up the hill...

3/27/2020

Gmail - Somers beach.



Chris Cassidy <cassidy43montana@hotmail.com>
To: andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Sun, Mar 22, 2020 at 8:24 PM

This was from 5 minutes ago... guy on a 4 wheeler and a white suburban doing burnouts all over the field... this is getting insane



andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Attn Angie Grove

1 message

Chris Cassidy <ccassidy43montana@gmail.com>
To: protectsomersbeach@gmail.com

Sun, Apr 5, 2020 at 9:20 AM

Hello,

I am wondering what you are planning to do about traffic on Somers Road if the State Park goes through? Somers Road is a residential street with many residents having children using it to ride bicycles ect. The increased traffic will create an even bigger nightmare on our residential street.

The people coming down are mostly locals at this point and it's already overcrowded. I cant imagine what will happen when this turns into Highway 93 with thousands of tourists driving thru daily. Has anyone even considered the property owners on Somers road? Probably not. People already dont obey the posted signs at the bird sanctuary... and they definitely dont obey the posted speed limit of 25 miles an hour. Do you think a bunch of tourists in a hurry to see everything will?

Maybe ask all the people who live in Somers or on Somers road if they want an extension of Highway 93 going thru town... I doubt it.

I'm sure there is a profit in here for someone... and it's not the homeowner's on Somers road.

I say no to this nightmare. And I oppose. Unless you mitigate the trash, dog crap and speeding.

Which I hope you are looking at.

I know of others concerned with the amount of traffic already.

Thank you for considering the other homeowners on Somers road.

Laura Katzman

From: Jerome Connolly <connollystrategies@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 5, 2020 2:37 PM
To: lkatzman@flatheadlandtrust.org
Subject: Sliters North Flathead Beach

I have one question upon which my support rests.

Your document states "Much of the north shore is also public land as part of the Flathead Lake Waterfowl Production Area; however, the Waterfowl Production Area is closed to human use between March and July each year to protect migrating and nesting birds."

How can I be assured that the presence of increased human and automobile traffic during the months of closure of the Flathead Lake Waterfowl Production Area to protect migrating and nesting birds won't jeopardize the migrating and nesting birds?

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jerome B Connolly
E-Memo from
Connolly Strategies
"Where every client is a partner"



andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Somers Beach Attention: Angie Grove Montana State Parks

2 messages

Dawn Frame <jeffdawnframe@yahoo.com>

Sat, Mar 28, 2020 at 12:08 PM

To: "ProtectSomersBeach@gmail.com" <ProtectSomersBeach@gmail.com>

My family (Wittlakes) homesteaded in Somers. My grandfather worked at the Tie Yard and mill and farmed. I would like to see Sliter's property kept as a "Nature Park." No picnic tables, toilets, benches or other improvements. Strictly carry in and carry out. Kept as it is. Any so called upgrades will ruin the whole history of this beach. Develop any toilets, trash cans or parking up at the BN mill site across the road. We have seen what happens when improvements are made as the swimming area and boat launch. Garbage cans overflowing and not emptied daily, underage parties and vandalizing other structures. Who will monitor this daily. No one. Leave it a Natural Sanctuary.

andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Sat, Mar 28, 2020 at 1:12 PM

To: Dawn Frame <jeffdawnframe@yahoo.com>

Thank you for your input, Dawn.
You can trust that this input will be forwarded.
Thank you for commenting.
Respectfully,
Andrea Sliter Goudge
On Behalf of the Sliter Famliy
[Quoted text hidden]



andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Proposed Somers Beach State Park1 message

Rick Hunt <rhunt441@gmail.com>

Sun, Mar 29, 2020 at 2:01 PM

To: ProtectSomersBeach@gmail.com

Cc: parksboard@mt.gov, Martha.Williams@mt.gov

Dear Angie Grove of Montana State Parks and Martha Williams of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks,

I am writing to oppose the proposed Somers Beach State Park idea. As conceived this concept will cause many more problems than it will alleviate.

I agree that Somers FAS is crowded in summer months. However the main problem is one of safety caused by lack of parking for trucks and boat trailers. The vast majority of users are boaters that are forced to park their boat trailers along the road edges on Hwy 93. These are the vehicles taking up the parking spaces. The proposed Sliter area is shallow and marshy, not suitable for any boat launching other than carry in kayaks or canoes.

This is a very small section of waterfront along the entire north shore Flathead Lake area. The majority ownership is U.S.F.W.S. which is designated as a waterfowl production area. This land has many conservation restrictions that extend to the waters edge for four and a half months of the year. There are no boundary markers, barriers or fencing to show land ownership from Somers to the Flathead River. Allowing public access on just the Sliter property will cause many people to encroach on closed lands breaking state and federal laws.

Enforcement of current laws and restrictions will be difficult because at present the Fish and Wildlife Service has no law enforcement officers anywhere in Northwest Montana due to federal budget cuts. State game wardens and park rangers have huge districts to cover and may not be available to enforce laws. Will the Flathead County Sherries office have a presence?

Lastly, knowingly allowing the public to swim and recreate next to a superfund site, an area that recently had petroleum contaminants seeping up through the ground along the shoreline, would be poor judgment from a public health standpoint.

Yes, a small subset of people have been using this area for decades. I think we need to consider what kind of use this area will receive if this is opened up to a population of 100,000 people that live in Flathead County. Not counting the thousands of tourists that arrive each summer. "Over run" doesn't seem like a strong enough term for it.

This idea of opening a half mile section of shoreline is really going to affect the entire north shore from Somers to the Flathead River mouth in Bigfork. There will be no way to keep people from using the entire beach.

If accessing the entirety of the north shore of Flathead Lake is the actual objective, then working with state and federal landowners to modify public access laws to allow legal access along the entire beach is a much more sensible and collaborative approach.

Thank you for your consideration,

Rick Hunt
Kalispell, Montana

Sent from my iPhone



andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Protecting Somers Beach!!

Jackson lewer <jackson.lewer@yahoo.com>
To: protectsomersbeach@gmail.com

Tue, Mar 24, 2020 at 4:35 PM

Hey there, I just saw your post on instagram. My family and I live in lakeside and love the area! My girlfriend and I just went to Somers Beach 2 days ago and I would hate to see it become a regulated state park! Here's a fun picture of us and the mountains.



image0.jpeg
158K



andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Somers Beach

1 message

cwak252@charter.net <cwak252@charter.net>

Tue, Mar 31, 2020 at 7:27 PM

To: "ProtectSomersBeach@gmail.com" <ProtectSomersBeach@gmail.com>

I am so against this state park idea, we live on the hillside west of the beach, there is trash, noise, dog poop, and even arguments that are heard by us. Leave this to the geese and birds, we keep moving the fowl and animals, stop already. !!!!!!!!!!!

How will Somers handle all this car traffic and parking, it is already a trial, Somers is historical and special, don't over run it. I get so tired of picking up cigarette butts, dog poop, and even diapers on the beach. We have already had parties late in the night with fires going, it just gets so old.

Janelle Logan



andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Somers Beach

cwak252@charter.net <cwak252@charter.net>
To: andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Wed, Apr 1, 2020 at 12:45 PM

Thank you for the update. I guess I am not done talking.

Tom once approached my husband and I, asking us about the beach and the activity. He said please let me know what you see, so we did, and that was at a time when things were not as active. He was concerned, we wondered about liability.

There is so much increased activity and traffic this past three years. There should be supervision now, we see people start to arrive at 8 and stay til late in the night. We see the partying, we have heard a very heated argument where one person threatened another about getting a gun and shooting their bleeping head off. I understand how wonderful it is down there, but we see the underbelly daily in the spring. What if a dog, and there are so many, attacks another dog, or worse chases down a small running child, what if someone starts a fight with injuries, or starts a fire with a cigarette that comes up our hill, or on and on and on, are the Sliters the liable party? They have had the written comments on what happens down there, so they have knowledge of the situation. I am concerned for them, they have been an involved part of Somers community, and are a part of the "Somers Family".

I may be sounding doomsday on this, but until this park issue is decided action must be in place now, to protect all people, this issue is only going to grow more as the weather warms up.

I am a retired nurse and have seen so many things happen to folks, this is a brewing storm on the beach with the potential for people to get hurt while having fun. Sun, booze, increases in numbers, it is fun until it is not. I never thought I would see a pandemic, see how things can turn on a small dime. Janelle Logan

[Quoted text hidden]



andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Somers beach

1 message

tjatoz@centurytel.net <tjatoz@centurytel.net>
To: protectsomersbeach@gmail.com

Tue, Mar 31, 2020 at 11:51 AM

We have been notified of the plans to turn the north shore near Somers into a state park. This for me, is very sad. If you walk through Somers, you will notice that it is a very peaceful small town, that is very rare this close to a National park. If you've lived in the valley a long time, I'm sure you've seen the chaos that has taken over. It used to be easy to go to Glacier park at any time during the summer and enjoy the scenery. Now you can't hardly drive through it without being in gridlock. Opening up this state park, will forever destroy the peacefulness of the only small town in this area. I was told that Tom Sliter wanted this area to be for the people and not for just the birds. I'm sorry to say that Tom didn't live long enough to see what's happened in the last two years. I truly think that he would change his mind about that and not turn our small town into total chaos. And that is exactly what will happen.

Please don't do it!

Terry Logan
112 Pikes Peak



andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Somers Beach State Park Proposal/Against

1 message

skibums15@charter.net <skibums15@charter.net>

Wed, Apr 8, 2020 at 3:33 PM

To: "ProtectSomersBeach@gmail.com" <ProtectSomersBeach@gmail.com>

To Whom It May Concern,

I am registering my comments that I am against the Somers Beach proposal.

As background, I have been a frequent user of numerous Montana State parks which I have used for hiking, biking, camping and for non-powered boating activity. I also spend a great deal of time in Somers and I have used the public launch site as well as the North Flathead Yacht Club. I'm also friends with local residents and know members of the Sliter family.

The concerns that cause me to be against the State Park proposal are as follows:

1. Concern that the state budget for parks will be unduly stretched with the addition of another park. We are in a period of great economic uncertainty. Building and maintaining the site will be costly. The volume of traffic to the park will be huge (as it already is at the other Somers site). Maintaining the grounds and restrooms will require considerable effort. If the park is approved, there should be video surveillance against vandalism which is certain to happen there.

2. Concern for property values and safety in Somers. The town will change from a quiet spot to one with a large amount of traffic, many of whom will be speeding. There is a major blind spot pulling out of Del's bar. A significant increase in traffic will guarantee accidents there and in other parts of town. Driving from the Bigfork crossover, there is a long straight stretch followed by a big curve which is another likely accident site. Homeowners on both sides of town will face huge traffic increases.

3. Concerns for on-water safety. The quasi-channel that leads from the current swim beach, inside the islands and in front of the Yacht Club docks is already the site of frequent near-accidents. Kayakers and paddleboarders, most with no skill or knowledge, hang out in this quasi-channel. Although the non-powered craft have the right-of-way, they have an obligation to not intentionally cause a hazard to navigation. Larger power boats with deeper keels and sail boats must navigate carefully there to avoid running aground on the rocks protruding from the southern-most island. There used to be frequent FWP on-water patrols but I've seen none for years.

4. Although the proposed park site is non-motorized, you can expect that power boats will launch at the current site, rip through the channel and head in as close as possible to the non-motorized beach to pick up swimmers. This will lead to a mish-mash of power boats, personal watercraft, paddle craft and swimmers. I've seen this scenario at several parks including West Shore, Lake Mary Ronan and the federal site on Swan Lake. Again, without any on-water patrols, this is a scenario for accidents.

5. If this proposal is approved, safety needs to be the number one concern. No wake zones need to be established in the quasi-channel (straight out from the current beach) as well as in the area near the proposed beach. More importantly, there needs to be a constant on-water FWP presence to keep this area safe from reckless and often drunken boaters. Safety must not be sacrificed in the effort to create more lake access.

Luanne Metcalf
165 Trailridge Rd
Kalispell, MT



andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

comments: Somers Beach Project

1 message

Bill and Devvi <billmor@cyberport.net>

Mon, Apr 6, 2020 at 2:10 PM

To: ProtectSomersBeach@gmail.com

Cc: Bill & Devvi Morgan <billmor@cyberport.net>

I am writing about the proposed land transaction on Somers Beach project. I am very familiar with these public access sites along the North Shore WPA. I visited these sites a lot this winter, primarily because I could access them because of the low snow levels. This entire beach shoreline is stunning and unique. Where else can a person walk on Flathead Lake where the beaches are sandy, and extend inward for long distances during the winter? And I have seen the mapping of this private land on my GPS when I've visited the most western public access.

First, I would like to thank the Sliters family for their consideration of their property for future conservation and public access. There isn't enough public access around Flathead Lake, and any new land sales go to the highest bidder and usually to a non-Montanan. So, I fully support new public access.

However, it is hard for me to understand why one piece of public access (boat launch) is being shuttered at Elmo and another being proposed around the bend. I am familiar with the differences in State Land Agencies that administer lands such as FWP, DNRC, etc. so there are different objectives.

I feel that whatever choice is implemented, I would hope the eastern border with the North Shore WPA be buffered and protected from any type of foot access during the rest of the breeding season March 1 to July 15. It is not easily tread, and during full pool, there is little shore line access anyway.

I also feel that a designation as "State Park" garners more publicity/promotion and development and I would rather see it as a day use recreational access point. I know the Somers Bay Park gets a lot of pressure during the hot days of summer, primarily from families who want to take a dip in the Lake. Also, the boat access site spills over into this smaller swimming bay. I'm not sure the vision for this proposed project fits that recreational need. I wonder if it is geared more for non-motorized water access such as canoes, kayaks, paddleboards, etc.

Since I haven't been in this area in summer, I'm not sure what full pool looks like on this private land, but wonder if it would be developed like the Volunteer Park in Lakeside.

Anyway, I fully support setting aside land for conservation and public access to Flathead Lake in lieu of private and commercial development, but I'm not sure about administering the land as a fully developed State Park.

Thank you for listening to my perspective.

Devvi Morgan 406/752-5047



andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

I'm writing in response to news that the Somers sandy beach

1 message

Michele Neal <mkunga@gmail.com>

Sun, Mar 29, 2020 at 2:20 PM

To: PROTECTSOMERSBEACH@gmail.com

Angie Grove w Montana State Parks and Martha Williams w Montana Fish and Wildlife

I'm writing in response to news that the Somers sandy beach could possibly become a state park.

I'm against it for several reasons. I appreciate that it is a special spot and that in the spring it is a favorite place that many families visit, but it has become over the years a problem for the property owners who live adjacent to the west of the beach area.

The Sliters property has mostly been marked with no trespassing signs all these years but that hasn't stopped people from going through the property to get to the sandy beach area. They then spread out in what ever direction they want with no regard that there is private property to the west and bird refuge to the east which is closed off in the spring. There are always people in that closed area. I have heard of a few people getting tickets for being in that area but I don't believe that fish and game are always out there to see how often it happens.

It is a great place for dogs to run loose as I have enjoyed with my dogs over the years. But now it is too crowded and I don't even take my dogs over there. It seems owners don't feel the need to pick up their dog's poop. And dogs are always getting away from their owners and running onto our properties and owners trying to catch them and then also coming onto our personal property. That can be understandable if it only happened a couple times but it seems to be increasing. I also have concerns that you stated the property owned by BNSF Railway Co. was formerly contaminated. Recently houses have been condemned and removed due to the contamination. We have been told the contamination has spread which is why work continues to be done in the area. Recreational use seems a bit premature at this time. I know for fact that when I kayak over to that area you can see a sheen of creosote on top of the lake. It is not always visible when we have had very wavy days on the lake but when it is calm it is there. And you can smell it on warm days.

Additionally this end of lake the conditions change quickly. I would be concerned for folks to not be prepared for the huge waves that can come in fast even if they think they are safe because it is in the more shallow area of lake. If you are out in a kayak or canoe you will be in trouble quickly when conditions change. I have watched as the inexperienced and the ones drinking get into trouble fast because they didn't take warning that it wasn't safe to go out at that time. We have had to rescue way to many folks who get there selfs in trouble during the summer time. And that is just the folks that come down through the county access area. Can't imagine the problems if it becomes a state park.

When the beach is busy and parking fills up in what parking space there is now, people drive around looking for an alternative on how to get to the the sandy beach on Sliters land. They often drive down Breezy Point to the county access. If they happen to notice that there are no parking signs that the county put up they then turn around in our driveways. If they don't acknowledge the no parking signs they park along the side of the road or smack in middle of street and hop out of their cars to go take a look to see if they can get down to the sandy beach. On a nice day there easily is 25-50 cars coming down and turning around. Even though there is a no turn around sign at top of hill. Then there is always the few who just park and tromp across private property to get to the beach. No regard to that we property owners own to the low water mark on Flathead Lake. If we do see them crossing our property and we calmly explain the state code, we are usually met with hostility and that we are wrong. Makes for an uncomfortable encounter almost every time. Obviously we are not always home and can't stare down at our property all afternoon long to see how often it actually happens. I can tell though there are many human tracks going through my personal property that someone has trespassed on. At the end of Breezy Point we have quite the wet beach from drainage of the rocky area in Somers. This forces people to not want to walk all the way out to waters edge before crossing over to the sandy beach. They choose instead to walk up on the dry beach and under our docks to cross over.

As an alternative if the beach does become a state park then perhaps the county would abandon the county access road at the end of Breezy Point, so that foot traffic across our properties would end and the constant turning around of vehicles would slow.

Additionally I would expect that that the beach area would be well marked and posted in the spring that there is no trespassing to the west of state park area. Not sure how you can do this when in reality, you can't fence the beach lake area when the water is out.

Dogs would need to be on leash which seems sad but necessary if state park.

I would also hope that non motorized water craft only be allowed in the state park. Somers is a very quiet area on the north shore. It is what makes it special to live here. We also get the chance to see all the lovely waterfowl that hang out on the lake in the winter and spring. More people and dogs means less waterfowl. They migrate away to quieter areas on lake when being chased by dogs. I watched it happen just today. Obviously a lot would change being between the Somers fishing access on the Hwy and then a state park on Somers Road. It will loose its charm in many ways. I imagine

3/29/2020

Gmail - I'm writing in response to news that the Somers sandy beach

that many will put a boat in at the Somers fishing access and then motor over to state park area and hang out in the shallows. The north shore will be changed forever. And I personally don't think that is a good thing.

Michele Neal
Somers, Mt

Sent from my iPad

Laura Katzman

From: Michele Neal <mkunga@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 4, 2020 5:17 PM
To: lkatzman@flatheadlandtrust.org
Subject: Re: I'm writing in response to news that the Somers sandy beach

Just giving you an update for Saturday the 4th of April. Was a sunny cold day. 14 people and dogs passed over the Sliters property area to the west. I was out doing a burn so it was easy to keep count. All waterfowl dispersed and weren't to be seen all afternoon. I choose not to walk out and tell them they were trespassing. Shouldn't be my job.

Michele Neal

Laura Katzman

From: mkunga@gmail.com
Sent: Tuesday, April 7, 2020 7:54 PM
To: lkatzman@flatheadlandtrust.org
Subject: Re: I'm writing in response to news that the Somers sandy beach

I hate to keep emailing you but this evening two motor bikes come down to beach area and passed thru the property west of Sliters property. They obviously were not at waters edge or in the water. Just want you to know what is happening down here on the north shore of Flathead.
Michele Neal

Laura Katzman

From: Michele Neal <mkunga@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 8, 2020 8:32 PM
To: Laura Katzman
Subject: Re: I'm writing in response to news that the Somers sandy beach

Not a great day on the lake. No water fowl to be seen. But lots of bodies.

I experienced 6 encounters of people and their dogs trespassing on my and neighbors private property today. One of which was a party of two adults and two dogs. They walked over my neighbors chain that is across their driveway and went down under their dock onto my property. Then argued with me when I tried to point out they were trespassing. They proceeded to trespass. These 6 groups all came down through the county public access road trying to get to Sliters beach. Which is sided by private property on both sides.

The article in paper has advertised the Somers sandy beach as a place to go now. Someone reported that there were at least 150 cars in parking area and along Somers Rd today. Busiest year ever that I have seen in 12 years. Social distancing doesn't seem to matter so much on private property even though state and federal lands are closed. Because Sliters beach is so busy it is forcing people to come west onto our private property. It does not matter that we have up no trespassing signs on our fences or docks. They just meander on over walking through our front yards with no regard. Most not understanding the difference between high and low water property rights on rivers and lakes in Montana. And then there are the ones who are outright rude and disrespectful of our property rights, which makes me NOT want to be understanding at all of people's desire to want to roam the Somers sandy beach area.

Michele Neal

Sent from my iPad



andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Attn: Angie Grove MSP & Martha Williams MFWP

1 message

Sue Snyder <sue@ravenswayart.com>
To: ProtectSomersBeach@gmail.com

Tue, Mar 31, 2020 at 2:03 PM

To all it may concern:

Please take into consideration that this proposed State Park is located in the middle of Beautiful Somers, a quaint, quiet community. This acreage is banked by local residents peaceful homes. It is not an isolated location, nor along a Highway access. The narrow road, with blind curves, were never built with the intention of heavy use.

I have lived on my property for 23 years. I have experienced the growth of increased traffic of people headed to this beach area all along, year after year. Many disregard the concept of Pack it in/Pack it out. Myself, and a handful of others, try to pick up the remains; broken bottles, plastics, dirty diapers, food stuff, cigarette butts, clothing, beach toys, etc.

Fire pits are often formed from removing rock from retaining shoreline walls, often left burning &/or smoldering when they leave. The surrounding vegetation is mostly tall unmowed grass, reeds & cattails, brush... and a hillside of unmanaged woods, dead standing & fallen trees, & homes. Sparks could easily set this whole town on fire, & lake effects, plus hillside, create winds/drafts. Carelessly discarded cigarettes litter the paths they take... mostly thru trampled dry grass.

As I gaze up from my laptop, folks are walking their dog thru another private property field, a new access people have started to use just this Spring, which happens to be Sliters land. I've even seen people drive their vehicles out into these dry, un cut fields to park, in which their hot engines could start a fire... they just don't THINK.

I also learned, from a neighbor, that talks amongst the Sliters & Parks Departments believe this proposed State Park should have overnight camping, to help pay for itself, as parks such as Lone Pine lose \$\$ every year without camp fees. This was NOT disclosed in the Saturday March 28 front page News, Daily Interlake.

This land SHOULD NOT in any way shape or form become an overnight destination!! The constant traffic, noise (which carries great distances), threat of fire, etc., racing cars speeding thru our streets (which often have kids, families, elderly walking... as we don't have sidewalks, nor room for them). WHO is going to maintain the calm, clean, peaceful, quiet that makes Somers all that it is? The trash that will litter our streets, as you know the drinking/driving beach dwellers will 'toss the evidence' that they don't leave on the beach, or in the Park. And WHO will clean the Beach, which untill high water, extends about 7 miles east to Flathead River. WHO/What will keep people from trespassing onto the Federally protected Waterfowl Lands (which has only one patrol rep, from Marion)? Signs posted to not enter this area are vague, boundaries unclear, & most think High Water Line is limit line.

State Park Land with DAY USE ONLY might have a chance of being maintained in an accepting way, tho where will the support \$\$ come from? The Public Beach around the corner on Hwy 93 overflows with trash, as not enough \$\$ is in budget to maintain what already exists, and people don't have enough sense to pack it out themselves.

This proposal of Park claims it will relieve pressure on the overcrowded access points at Somers fishing access, & beach. We all know that is not true!! It will only bring More. Plus, State Parks are known for having fishing/boat access, which this site could not accommodate (other than kayak, canoe, float tubes.). Its a Flood plain acreage, and the Southern winds that blow in continually erode the North shoreline. There is No Beach area when the water is full pool. It becomes a mosquito infested swampy place with waves churning dark brown/black muck of decaying vegetation. Often can't wear enough Deet to get in, let alone back out.

How do you propose to secure the shoreline from erosion? A high bank of blasted rock might work for a while, but rounded river rock will only wash away, plus waves carry it up on shore. Massive driftwood trees get thrown onto shore, at times great distances.

I could go on & on...

Point is, yes, this is a beautiful area, and locals have enjoyed it for generations. Word is getting out, the crowds are getting bigger (& more careless!!). On a nice day vehicles are parked Everywhere. This will not change with a designated parking lot. Thru traffic & Emergency Responders have a difficult time getting thru near single lane roads with cars, people kids, dogs etc. parked, mingling everywhere.

This is a Community, a Town, A residential neighborhood. Made more open thru demolished homes of locals thru Railroad/EPA lawsuit.

IF this area is to become a State Park eventually, then I firmly believe Day Use Only is the only manageable possibility. With NO road leading thru the fields to lake, boat access would/should be limited to carry in only.

These fields have been open range to wildlife for a Very Long time. Deer, waterfowl, raptures, rodents, fox, coyotes, owls, occasional bear & mountain lion, All use this corridor to navigate the North Shore. You clog it up with parking, fencing, manmade eyesores, then the wildlife, the beautiful North Shore, the peaceful, lovely area disappears.

And you could not have enough bathroom facilities to accomodate the masses, nor keep them corralled in the posted area.

Please consider the True consequences of this proposal (in which The Public only had 4 days to respond, if they even read the article).

Yes, you will get mostly supporting votes, from those that don't think beyond More Access. But PLEASE THINK, CONSIDER, STUDY THE CONSEQUENCES.

This proposal may take years to finalize with all departments involved. Yet the word is out now, and the crowds are coming... with no boundaries, rules, designated parking. Maybe Sliters, or someone, could at least post Pack It In/Pack It Out signs, along with No Smoking (thru fields), NO Campfires, No Littering, Pick up after your Dogs, No Parking, etc. Sign, Sign, Everywhere a Sign... in this beautiful, pristine, natural habitat.

Thank You for your time and considerations.

Sincerely, Susan M. Snyder, Somers property owner & year round resident.

Scarecrow Sue :)

Have A Ravens' Way Kinda Day !

Laura Katzman

From: Laura Katzman <lkatzman@flatheadlandtrust.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 9, 2020 12:21 PM
To: 'andrea goudge'; 'Mark Tuttle'
Subject: RE: Somers Beach State Park

Hi, Mark,

Your input and all input received will be forwarded to the MT State Parks and Recreation Board and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Your input was received in time to be included in the group of letters received by April 8 to the MT State Parks and Recreation Board and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Thanks for your thoughts!

Laura Katzman
Flathead Land Trust
(406) 871-9978 (cell)

From: andrea goudge [mailto:protectsomersbeach@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, April 9, 2020 12:16 PM
To: Mark Tuttle <mark51242@yahoo.com>; Laura Katzman <lkatzman@flatheadlandtrust.org>
Subject: Re: Somers Beach State Park

Thank you for writing in, Mark.

The State Parks Board Chair asked us to generate initial letters of community input so the Parks Board can consider whether or not to even move this proposal forward to a more formal and thoughtful evaluation. We did not expect the overwhelming volume of support and other input nor the media attention at this early stage, and thus extended the date for input to be received.

The Beacon featured an article the week prior and again in their online edition earlier in the week. The proposal was featured in the Daily Interlake two weeks in a row. Information was publicized by Somers Company Town Project in their newsletter, by the Lakeside-Somers Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Clubs and other avenues to seek community input.

The issues you raise regarding the Somers FAS Site off Boon Road are one of the reasons our family would like to see a portion of the non-motorized watercraft and swimmer traffic directed east to our property in Somers.

We are grateful for the opportunity to work with State Parks is that if this proposal moves to the next step with State Parks and FWP, a formal process for public input will be extensive and a required part of the process, not just an imprint of what a few people want, but many stakeholders -- public and neighbors alike.

Thank you for your input, Mark. It is appreciated.
Andrea Sliter Goudge
On Behalf of the Sliter Family

On Thu, Apr 9, 2020 at 11:07 AM Mark Tuttle <mark51242@yahoo.com> wrote:

I find it a little frustrating that the April 8 edition of the Beacon contained an article about this subject, the first I was aware, and stated the deadline for comment is also April 8! Given that you will be accepting mailed in comments for at least a day or two, I hope my input can also be entered into the record.

While the intent is noble, Boon Road is already a challenge for access onto Highway 93 for much of the summer.. Increasing public access will obviously also increase traffic density in an already very congested area: boat ramp, boat ramp parking, and Boon Road. Any consideration must include a well planned and safe solution to manage this increased density and access. The local residents should not be significantly impacted in a negative way by this proposal, if it in fact occurs. Thank you, Mark Tuttle



andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Somers Beach/State Park1 message

Dan Brien <danbrien@montanasky.com>
To: protectsomersbeach@gmail.com

Thu, Apr 2, 2020 at 8:26 AM

Angie and Martha,

I realize the deadline has passed for comments on this subject but I will still submit my opinion. As a homeowner on the north shore of the lake, this popular private beach has been an issue every year for those of use that live in the area. As people has found the "entrance" to the beach, then they continue with their exploration of the north shore by crossing onto private property to the west. We have posted signs pursuant to MCA lake low water ownership, but to no avail. If this proposal does in fact happen it is my hope the trespassing we have endured will cease. I not only own property but also caretake property on the north shore and it is a constant battle.

My biggest concern for this proposal is the preservation of that area. Once this area is opened up it will affect the spring waterfowl and the cleanliness of that beach. It will be another place for congestion and garbage. In the article it states "...but it needs to be in the hands of an agency who can manage the high use this site receives, especially in the spring." You and I both know it will not be feasible to have someone on site to manage high traffic volume and contend with garbage and the drinking that happens like at the Somers Boat Launch. I would ask you where is the management of the Somers Boat Launch during high traffic season? Because there is no management of the Somers Boat Launch I am amazed there hasn't been serious accidents along that stretch of highway.

I believe there are many people who would enjoy the possibility of this state park, but I do not believe the state agencies have realistic plans that would contend with the influx of people and the garbage they will leave behind.

Thank you.

Hellen Brien



andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Fwd: Delivery Status Notification (Failure)

Hellen Brien <hellen.brien@gmail.com>
To: protectsomersbeach@gmail.com

Tue, Apr 7, 2020 at 8:32 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Hellen Brien <hellen.brien@gmail.com>

To: protectsomerabeach@gmail.com

Cc:

Bcc:

Date: Tue, 7 Apr 2020 20:27:48 -0600

Subject: Trespassing on private property

And this is the unfortunate consequence for us private homeowners. Motorcycles. and no waterfowl. Next few days will be nice and warm. Would be nice to have FWP patrolling

----- Message truncated -----

1 April 2020

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Attn: Angie Grove
490 N. Meridian Rd.
Kalispell, MT 59901

Dear Angie:

As a long-time resident of Somers and wildlife biologist with a history of work on the north shore of Flathead Lake, I am writing to express both my support and my concerns regarding the potential acquisition of the Sliter family property for the creation of a new State Park. I fully support the acquisition of shoreline properties on Flathead Lake, which are much needed for public access and enjoyment. But there are unique issues regarding this particular property that I believe demand careful consideration during the development of facilities and management activities on the site, if it is acquired.

To clarify my perspectives, my wife and I have owned a house on Breezy Point in Somers since 1984. As a long-time birder and professional wildlife biologist, I provided much of the information which resulted in the north shore of the lake being identified by Montana Audubon as an Important Bird Area. During my tenure as a wildlife biologist with MFWP in Kalispell, I was the project leader for BPA-funded projects assessing the importance of the north shore to waterfowl and other wildlife, which included an analysis of the habitat values lost along the lakeshore due to the construction and operation of Kerr Dam. The latter effort included interviews with long-term residents and review of historic aerial imagery that confirmed the value of what was once known as "Somers Beach".

Because I have lived in Somers for >30 years, I am well aware of the level of public use at the site, particularly in spring when water levels are low. And I really like the idea of once again having a public site that can be treasured by the community. But I have also seen the level of trespass that occurs regularly by people hiking well east of the property onto the Flathead WPA, during the nesting period, when it is officially closed to access. Indeed, people frequently park and walk into the Flathead WPA right at the signs saying "Closed to all Access". The north shore is one of the most important places in the valley for migratory waterfowl and shorebirds during this closure period, and one of the only uninterrupted wildlife corridors spanning the valley. If the site is developed, I suggest that specific steps be taken to limit illegal access onto the WPA, through a combination of directed outreach and enforcement.

I also understand that one justification for this acquisition will be to reduce pressure on the boat ramp area in Somers Bay. I strongly urge you to resist efforts to essentially make the Sliter property an overflow parking area for that access point. Perhaps you could limit boat access at this site to non-motorized watercraft especially since water depths are not adequate for larger boats. Lastly, I think it will be crucial to get a commitment from Burlington Northern regarding their "inholdings:" to the Sliter property. Site design and management will be hampered significantly if these parcels are not also available for incorporation into the State Park (based on liability or other concerns).

In summation, I support the acquisition and management of the Sliter family property in Somers as an addition to the State Park system in Region 1. But I hope that if the project proceeds, that scoping will address issues of wildlife habitat, access control, potential use levels, and the status of Burlington Northern holdings in some detail. I will look forward to additional opportunities for public input.

Yours Truly,
Dan Casey

Cc: ProtectSomersBeach@gmail.com
lkatzman@flatheadlandtrust.com

Laura Katzman

From: Jane Corwin <corwinjane@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2020 1:30 PM
To: lkatzman@flatheadlandtrust.org
Cc: Joan Ridell; Alice Cabell; lee zimmerman; Dennis Spain; Merle Robinson; Cathi
Subject: Flathead Lake Proposed Public Access/State Park Project

Dear Sir/Madam:

We are residents of Somers and also members of the many environmental organizations dedicated to protecting the Flathead Valley, Lakes and rivers. This is a very interesting proposal and we appreciate the opportunity to comment during this initial phase. We live off of Boon Road, opposite the boat landing and have seen tremendous growth and subsequent congestion every summer. Having another place to offer beachside swimming and kayaking, etc., seems like a good idea but this will need to be carefully thought out and a thorough environmental impact assessment done. Here are some initial comments:

1. In your background document and cover letter, you mention the fact that this portion of the lake is "developable"—is this true? Being adjacent to wildfowl protection area as well as a major Superfund site, I am not sure this is a true statement.
2. You provide a map with a small section noted as the public access park, but the beach itself extends in front of the wildfowl production and protected areas. How would you continue to protect that part of the vast beach during those months of March-July? This aspect is not mentioned in your summary proposal.
3. Currently, access to the beachhead is accomplished by walking along a grassy path and much of it is fenced off with no-trespassing signs. People simply park their cars in a grassy spot off of the road and walk to the beach. There is also a narrow gravel road which is fenced off but this road is right below private homes. What exactly is proposed to provide public access? How do you protect the serenity of the surrounding homes and overall quietness of the area? I'm sure those homeowners would not appreciate cars, trucks, motorcycles, etc. literally a few yards from their homes. This aspect will require careful planning and foresight.
4. Dogs. Currently folks can walk their dogs and take them to the beachhead. This is a good thing since there is no dog park in the town of Somers. (A dog park was proposed next to the Superfund site which is on the north side of the road but so far nothing has happened on that front. It would be a perfect place to run your dogs safely.) If you indeed have a more organized public accessible park you will need to think about people's dogs. It seems a separate designated place for dogs to run freely and where you could have doggy cleanup bags provided would help keep the beach clean and free of dog poop. The grassy path leading to the beach now is absolutely littered with dog excrement and very unsanitary.

These are just a few initial thoughts. Protecting this area while offering a safe place to swim and kayak away from motorized boats, etc., seems like a very good idea, but with all such ideas, there are pros and cons and many unintended consequences that will need very careful planning.

Thanks for giving us the opportunity to comment and please keep us informed of developments.

Jane Corwin and Dennis Spain



andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Beach proposal

1 message

Denise Davies <deetledavies@yahoo.com>

Wed, Mar 25, 2020 at 10:02 AM

To: "protectsomersbeach@gmail.com" <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Hello

I have lived "on the hill" adjacent to the beach access area for 28 years. I have watched it change from a few Somers locals walking and skiing on the beach to 55 cars last Sunday, when I was there picking up barrels and buckets full of trash.

I agree that something needs to be done. MOST IMPORTANTLY, I THINK INPUT FROM ALL OF US WHO LIVE ON THE HILL SHOULD HAVE UTMOST PRIORITY.... AND APRIL FIRST IS A RIDICULOUS DEADLINE!

Lakeside/Somers Chamber of Commerce is enthusiastically in support of this as a boon to local businesses. Let's first consider the impact on those of us who consider this their backyard and have homes adjacent to the proposed park.

Below are my comments, suggestions and greatest concerns:

- 1) Hours of use. I am assuming this will be day use only. Most of us have bedrooms bordering this access, and can easily hear voice level conversations that get carried up the hill. So, respecting the peace and quiet of those of us who live here and have respectable hours (8 a.m. to 8 p.m.).
- 2) Keeping the area as it is. Making it an unspoiled, undeveloped greenbelt for foot traffic only. No developed access. No watercraft use, no picnic tables, etc. Putting a toilet at the parking area only. An exception would be providing trash cans. Sam Bibler's greenbelt areas around Foy's Hill are an outstanding model.
- 3) No campfires. This has been an increasing concern as I have observed families cut down living branches to try to make fires, and leave trash in ash piles all over the beach. Also of concern is the potential fire hazard to Pavillion Hill.
- 4) Input from USFWS regarding closure and bird nesting season. Kevin (phone 260-5192) at USFWS has requested to be involved. Beach users have continually ignored the spring nesting closures and the appropriate agency should have jurisdiction as to how the beach use is managed.
- 5) Pets on leash.

Once again, I hope you allow Somers residents and USFWS appropriate time to comment and be an integral part of this plan going forward.

Sincerely,

Denise Davies
PO Box 186/113 Pavillion Hill Ave
261-3426



andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

A neighbor's opinion

1 message

ansley watson <aew333@yahoo.com>

Mon, Mar 23, 2020 at 6:15 AM

To: protectsomersbeach@gmail.com, ansley watson <aew333@yahoo.com>

Our family resides on Breezy Point. We treasure the Somers Beach and consider it a "hidden gem". It feels like our own private cross-country ski haven all winter and we love seeing wildlife in the woods between our house and the beach. We appreciate the Sliter's allowing people to access the beach by crossing through their land and we agree that access should be made "legal" and less confusing to visitors. We are curious about the idea of a state park. We know that creating a state park here would bring in many more people, so of course we have mixed feelings. But, we believe that it could be done in a way that limits people and impact on wildlife and land. If a state park is created here, we have a few ideas to keep impact at a minimum:

1. Keep parking along Somers Road and make the park "walk-in" only.
2. Keep the trail to the beach through the field and away from the small section of forest where foxes den and deer hide. It is such a small area of forest that we believe it needs to be protected from public trails and use so that animals will still have a refuge.
3. Gate the entrance, much like at Wayfarer's to limit access.
4. Build a small playground, again like the one at Wayfarer's, near the parking area, and away from the beach. Perhaps in Pickleville or in a place that could connect to the bike path. We have been working with The Somers Historical committee and County Parks on this idea for years to no avail. We once wrote this idea to the Sliter family and hope they are considering it. our family would be very happy to help out with this project and already have approx. \$2000 earmarked for a Somers playground that could go toward the equipment purchase.

So, in review, our opinion is mixed. We LOVE the idea of protecting the beach and very much appreciate the Sliter family's generosity in creating a legal access. We would like to see a state park created if impact could be kept to a minimum and the woods would be left "out of bounds". We think that mainly a legal parking area, pit toilets at the parking area, a small playground near the parking area, and a designated trail through the field to the beach would be appropriate.

Thank you so much and please call us if we can be of any help with this idea and especially to let us know what you think about a small piece of playground equipment.

Sincerely,

Rob and Ansley Ford (and children ages 4 and 8)
[240 Breezy Point Ave.](#)
[Somers, MT 59932](#)

(406)857-6788



andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Attn: Angie Grove and Martha Williams

1 message

Gaelyn Moore <gaelyn.moore@gmail.com>

Wed, Apr 8, 2020 at 11:18 AM

To: protectsomersbeach@gmail.com

Hello,

I hope this comment finds you well. I grew up in the Flathead and have enjoyed many a special day on the Sliter's property especially when the lake water is low. We grew up calling the place Africa and it is magical as I'm sure you know. The last time I was there I was astounded by how many people were also there. While this often bothers me, it was also not long before we walked past the main "crowds" and seemed to have miles of beach to ourselves. We are SO LUCKY.

I would like to see the beach and access developed minimally. Maybe a sign, waste basket, and a gate to go through. I do not want any more attraction there like docks or boat ramps. I very much respect the Sliter's opinions and understand the need for a change.

Good luck, and good day!

Gaelyn Moore
Kila, MT

Martha Williams, Director, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Angie Grove, Chair, Montana State Parks & Recreation Board
1420 East Sixth Avenue
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

March 28, 2020

Dear Martha and Angie,

I strongly support saying "no" residential or commercial development on the Sliter property on the north shore of Flathead Lake. On the other hand, it seems counter-intuitive to me to support turning the land into a public access area without some serious restrictions on types and amounts of use. The Somers Beach access to the west is quite crowded at times in the spring, summer and fall, and other public access points on other lakes in the area (e.g. Echo, Thompson Chain, Ashley, and Bitterroot) have served to increase human recreational use beyond the levels originally intended -- to the detriment of native wildlife. Sorry, but they are a real "zoo" at times. A "public access" in the traditional sense, could actually increase human disturbance to local, nesting and migratory wildlife. A publicly owned area could, if done the right way, conserve bird habitat for approximately 230 species, and could fill a critical gap between Somers and the adjacent U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Flathead Lake Waterfowl Production Area.

Conserving the open space in the north shore of Flathead Lake and the Flathead River is spearheaded by the collaborative Flathead River to Lake Initiative, of which Flathead Audubon is an enthusiastic partner. The Initiative involves private landowners, land trusts, conservation organizations, and county, tribal and federal agencies working together to conserve wetlands, floodplains, riparian areas, and associated uplands that help sustain our excellent water quality, important fish and wildlife habitat, rich farm soils, beautiful scenery, and outstanding recreational opportunities. The north shore of Flathead Lake provides 7 miles, and 2,400 acres, of unbroken shoreline, wetlands, and adjoining uplands that support 230 bird species. A Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Wildlife Management Area, and private conservation easements share in protection of the north shore of Flathead Lake.

The Sliter land in conservation easement could also provide *limited* year-round public access to that portion of the North Shore of Flathead Lake, which is currently limited seasonally by the (proper) closing of the Waterfowl Production Area. Literally tens of thousands of birds stage on the Lake during spring and fall migrations. Again, if done right, public ownership as a conservation area could facilitate viewing of birds by the public in a world-class north-south migration corridor. Flathead Audubon Christmas Bird Counts, Birdathons, Bird Surveys -- and many field trips with adults and school children use the North Shore extensively.

The Sliter Family is showing great foresight and community support by offering this possibility. The area is a jewel in the Flathead Valley -- and completely unsuitable for commercial and residential development. I hope, if the easement comes to fruition, that proper consideration be given to potential illegal trespass on the WPA land, *no* campground next to the WPA, eliminate or mitigate potential habitat encroachment or loss for nesting and migratory birds, create an *effective* buffer zone to the WPA, wetland protection, seasonal use considerations, and a way to effectively control pets. You might want to consider a wildlife area with boardwalk and bird viewing tower, with a protected zone next to the WPA. Water drawdowns in the fall, winter and early spring can increase the width of the shoreline by a hundred yards or more, and make preventing access into the WPA protected area nearly impossible. Buffers would be mandatory, and any fence would have to extend far into the lake to be effective. In short, I'm not sure a "public access", in the traditional sense, is the highest and best use for keeping the North Shore an irreplaceable part of the Flathead Valley. It may even defeat the intended purpose.

I am all for public ownership and /or a conservation easement, but not if it turns the area into a

"Play Park" for more and more people. The State's first FWP Wildlife Viewing Area in the West Flathead Valley Ponds would be an ideal model to emulate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dennis L. Olson", with a stylized, cursive script.

Dennis L. Olson, Flathead Audubon Conservation Educator (but writing strictly for myself)

1230 5th Avenue East, Kalispell MT 59901

Laura Katzman

From: Julie Stetter <juliestetter@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2020 12:29 PM
To: Laura Katzman
Subject: Fwd: Fw: Beach proposal

Somers Beach Access proposal

Hello Angie Grove,

Below are my comments, suggestions and greatest concerns:

- 1) Hours of use. I am assuming this will be day use only. Most of us have bedrooms bordering this access, and can easily hear voice level conversations that get carried up the hill. So, respecting the peace and quiet of those of us who live here and have respectable hours (8 a.m. to 8 p.m.).
- 2) Keeping the area as it is. Making it an unspoiled, undeveloped greenbelt for foot traffic only. No developed access. No watercraft use, no picnic tables, etc. Putting a toilet at the parking area only. An exception would be providing trash cans. Sam Bibler's greenbelt areas around Foy's Hill are an outstanding model.
- 3) No campfires. This has been an increasing concern as I have observed families cut down living branches to try to make fires, and leave trash in ash piles all over the beach. Also of concern is the potential fire hazard to Pavillion Hill.
- 4) Input from USFWS regarding closure and bird nesting season. Kevin (phone 260-5192) at USFWS has requested to be involved. Beach users have continually ignored the spring nesting closures and the appropriate agency should have jurisdiction as to how the beach use is managed.
- 5) Pets on leash.

Once again, I hope you allow Somers residents and USFWS appropriate time to comment and be an integral part of this plan going forward.

Sincerely,

Julie Stetter
885-4792

From: **mrddanasrobinson** <mrddanasrobinson@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Apr 9, 2020 at 9:05 AM

Subject: Somers Beach State Park Proposal

To: <ProtectSomersBeach@gmail.com>

Attn: Angie Grove, Martha Williams

I hope I am not too late to make a suggestion.

One of the activities my family has enjoyed over the years was walking along the the boardwalk of the Pacific Ocean, and along the Embarcadero of San Diego bay. When we were finally able to move to the Flathead in 2007, we sought places to go and walk while enjoying our beautiful scenery. We soon realized that Flathead Lake was only accessible at a few locations and they were not designed for leisurely walks to enjoy the lake and mountain views.

Please know we are not in the least interested in trying to transform where we live now into what we left, however we would love to see part of the proposal to include a long trail or elevated walkway that might include a waterfowl viewing area.

If you are in need of any public members for a committee, I would gladly participate on one!

Dana Robinson
406.844.0928

Sent from my Galaxy Tab® A



andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

The proposed Sandy Beach Public Park.

4 messages

Morey Grove <morey353@gmail.com>
To: ProtectSomersBeach@gmail.com

Mon, Mar 30, 2020 at 9:43 AM

March 30, 2020

Protect Somers Beach.

Angie Grove with Montana State Parks.

Below are my, Morey D. Grove, views - opinions I wanted to share. I resided my first 59 years (1946 - 2005) in Somers and have many memories of the Town and the Somers Tie Plant.

I've read the proposal by Sliter's to create a Public Park in the area close to the old Sandy Beach area of Somers.

I like the idea of another Public Park with Lake access in the Somers area, but I have concerns about Public Safety in the proposed Public Park Location.

One, is this area has an underground "liquid layer of creo" that flows north as the late Spring Lake level rises and flows south in the Fall as the Lake level lowers.

A few years ago, in the beach area east of where the old Sandy Beach road ended, this "liquid layer of creo" surfaced, that required extensive EPA action to remove - clean up.

The second concern I have is the closeness of the current EPA "Extraction Wells," where small amounts of this "floating cero layer" are being pumped out during the summer.

These "Extraction Wells" are located about 300 feet south of the county road that was about a block & half from the South end of the former Somers Tie Plant Retort building, i.e. the structure that contained the 2 long creo treating cylinder tanks, i.e. "Retorts," and needed equipment to operate the "Retorts."

My last concern is the former burn site of the waste creo sludge that the EPA has stalled on its Clean Up.

Source of this "Waste Cero Sludge."

The Somers Tie Plant pressure treated railroad ties with "Creosolte," a wood preservative that was a blend of coal tar and petroleum. Treatment via heat and pressure was done in the Tie Plant's two long creosolte treating cylinders called Retorts, located in the west side of the Retort building that was located on the South end of the Tie Plant property.

The annual cleaning of the Retorts was during the Tie Plant Employees yearly Vacation, which was the last two weeks of August.

Creosolte sludge on the bottom of the "Retorts" was manually removed and loaded into a steel vat that was emptied. Starting about 1955, and for about 3 years, this waste creosolte sludge was dumped about half way down the old Sandy Beach road, on the east side of the road. This was the former location of a Slaughter House for a Somers Meat Market.

Once the Retorts were cleaned, the large pile of creosolte waste was burned. The fire produced a very tall black smoke column visible for miles.

Currently this burn site is covered by gravel, thus the residue is not visible.

The EPA which has control and oversight of Creosolte Cleanup resulting from operation of the former Somers Tie Plant, has been informed of this former Creosolte Burn Site. Presently It has NOT taken any action to address the issue or clean it up.

Yes, I agree the Public needs another Public Park with Lake access in Somers area. But to convert the popular Somers Beach on Flathead Lake's north shore, an area of Documented Creosolte contamination that is a recognized EPA Public Hazard, into a Public Park, should NOT occur.

The current use of the former DeLong "Red Barn" area, by persons who park their cars there, walking down to the Lake. This parking lot should be "fenced off," as part of the NO public access to the proposed Public Park due to "Creosolte Contamination."

These are just my views - opinions I wanted to express.

Respectfully,

Morey D. Grove

Kalispell, Mt.

andrea goudge <protectsomensbeach@gmail.com>

Mon, Mar 30, 2020 at 4:51 PM

To: Morey Grove <morey353@gmail.com>, Laura Katzman <lkatzman@flatheadlandtrust.org>

Morey:

Thank you so much for sharing your views. Dave Ruby and Carolyn Wondrow shared much of this with me a few weeks back. Your letter will be included in the letters that move forward. I do feel better that EPA has indicated a recreational

site would be an appropriate use for this site. If this proposal moves forward, additional environmental assessment will be included as part of the FWP process.

Thank you so much for sending in your thoughts.

Respectfully,

Andrea Sliter Goudge

P.S. I have the black and white photo you gave me in honor of my dad in my office. Thank you!

[Quoted text hidden]

Morey Grove <morey353@gmail.com>

Mon, Mar 30, 2020 at 8:19 PM

To: andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Andrea,

Thank you for your very kind reply to what I “assumed” was a negative pen on the proposed Somers Public Park in the Sandy Beach area.

Your statement *that EPA has indicated a recreational site would be an appropriate use for this site*, is NEWS to me. Thus I accept and will support your efforts to create this Public Park

If possible, please keep me updated as - *If this proposal moves forward, additional environmental assessment will be included as part of the FWP process.*

Happy to read that *the black and white photo you gave me in honor of my dad in my office.*

If possible, could you give me a brief description of this photo? I don't recall the photo details.

Respectfully,

Morey

[Quoted text hidden]

andrea goudge <protectsomersbeach@gmail.com>

Mon, Mar 30, 2020 at 8:43 PM

To: Morey Grove <morey353@gmail.com>

Thank you, Morey. It is a photo of the BNSF lumber mill and log yard. I can't remember which year. I will look when I get to the office tomorrow. Every voice and perspective deserves to be heard. I appreciate the history and knowledge you have of our town. Miss my dad. He would have been so glad to talk with you about the old days!

Best,

Andrea

[Quoted text hidden]